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DR. ISAAC HULSE

SURGEON, U. S. NAVY

1797-1856

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

BY

CHARLES J. WERNER

Hulse

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1797-1856

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS



Isaac Huls

Reproduced from a water-color portrait by B. D. Williams after the original
miniature owned by Miss Lena Ritch.

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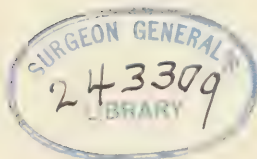
CHARLES J. WERNER

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1922



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1922

THIS BOOK
IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED
TO MY TWO SONS
CHARLIE AND WILLIE

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PREFACE

IT was originally intended to incorporate the following work in the Year Book of the Suffolk County, N. Y., Historical Society for 1919. When the author had progressed a little with his task, he became convinced that the production would be entirely too lengthy for inclusion in the Year Book, and therefore decided to make a separate publication out of it.

With this decision made, it became possible to include many interesting letters and other particulars concerning Dr. Isaac Hulse which could not have been included in a shorter sketch.

The author takes this opportunity to render thanks to Mr. Richard M. Bayles, of Middle Island, L. I., a lifelong resident and historian of the locality in which Dr. Hulse was born. Mr. Bayles has supplied many interesting items concerning Dr. Hulse's life. Thanks also are due to the Navy Department, Bureau of Navigation, for furnishing a transcript of the record of service of Dr. Hulse. The frontispiece is a reproduction of a small miniature which Dr. Hulse had painted of himself to give to his sister Mrs. Charity Ritch, of Middle Island. Her granddaughter, Miss Lena Ritch, of Port Jefferson, the present owner of the likeness, kindly consented to its reproduction and furnished the photograph.

Babylon, L. I., Nov. 8, 1919.

DR. ISAAC HULSE
HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

CHAPTER I

ANCESTRY—EARLY LIFE—ENTRANCE INTO THE NAVY—TRAVELS

DR. ISAAC HULSE, distinguished Naval Surgeon and native of Suffolk County, N. Y., was born August 31, 1797, at Coram, the youngest son of Major Caleb M. Hulse and his wife, Jerusha Petty Hulse. Dr. Hulse was an educated gentleman and a man of considerable attainments in his chosen profession, yet his life and achievements seem to have been overlooked, so far, by historians and biographers. To rescue from oblivion the main facts connected with the life of a man to whom honor was paid during his lifetime is the purpose of this biographical sketch. Our subject not only was a native son, but descended from an old Suffolk County family whose progenitors were among the early settlers.

Coram is a small village, or rather settlement, in Brookhaven town, and the inhabitants are mostly engaged in agriculture and wood-cutting. Due to its central location it was for many years the place for transacting the public business of Brookhaven town. The name is said to have been derived from the cognomen of an Indian chief who doubtless had a residence in the vicinity. Although Coram has never been a settlement of any size, still it boasts of being the birthplace of three men who have left the imprint of their lives on history's pages, namely, Captain Nathaniel Norton, a revolutionary soldier; Quartermaster Ebenezer Dayton, also a participant in that great struggle; and, lastly, Dr. Isaac Hulse. The Hulses lived in the eastern part of the settlement on the middle country road leading to Middle Island.

Dr. Hulse's ancestry has been traced back to his grandfather Paul Hulse, who lived at Coram and died February 7, 1799, aged eighty-one. His son was Caleb M., a prominent man in the town, and father of Dr. Hulse. Major Caleb Mapes Hulse was a town trustee for several years and

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president of that body in 1809, commissioner of schools in 1798, and died January 1, 1810, at the age of sixty-two. His wife, Jerusha, daughter of Daniel Petty, died September 7, 1840, aged eighty-six. Dr. Hulse's parents and grandfather are buried in the cemetery of the Middle Island Presbyterian Church, at Middle Island, L. I.

Family tradition states that when Dr. Isaac Hulse was a boy he would not work with his brothers Phineas, Daniel, Caleb, and Whitehead on their father's farm at Coram, but would steal away to the pond where he had a fleet of miniature boats and amuse himself sailing them. Thus at an early age he evinced a desire for nautical matters. One of the brothers became angry because he would not do his share of the farm work, and destroyed all of Isaac's little boats. After that Isaac threw down his hoe in the corn-field and declared with an oath that he would never hoe another hill of corn. He then gave his attention to studies and qualified himself to teach in the common schools of the day. Afterward, with his mother's help, he went away to school and pursued the course of life that made him somewhat famous. The remark of his mother in after years is preserved in the family: "Oh, yes, they call Dr. Isaac a self-made man; but *I* know of more than *one* hundred dollars he has had from me to help him on with his studies."

We know from Thompson's mention of him in the "History of Long Island"¹ that Dr. Hulse taught school in Westchester County and was further educated at Union Hall Academy, Jamaica, where he became proficient in Latin, Greek, and French, and later taught those languages. While in Westchester he attracted the favorable attention and confidence of several prominent individuals, who gave him free access to their libraries. This golden opportunity was made good use of by the struggling scholar, and he often referred to it in his later years.

His next move was to Baltimore, which was a fortunate one, for in that city he was attracted to the study of medicine, in which science he was destined to excel. He first taught a classical school, but later entered the

¹ "History of Long Island," by Benjamin F. Thompson, who was a close friend of Dr. Hulse. This book is the acknowledged authority on Long Island. A revised and enlarged edition, consisting of four volumes, was published in 1917 under the editorial supervision of the author of this biography.



Birthplace of Dr. Isaac Hulse, Coram, Long Island, N. Y.

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medical class of the University of Maryland, and graduated in April, 1823,¹ "when he was honored with the usual diploma and a gold medal besides, as a reward of merit, on which occasion he composed and read a medical thesis in Latin."²

Sometime during the latter part of the year 1820 or early part of 1821, Dr. Hulse married Amelia Roberts, daughter of Rev. Dr. George Roberts, of Baltimore, Md. Unfortunately we are unable to give a more definite date from data now at hand. Thompson, in his "History of Long Island," gives January 7, 1824, but we know this is incorrect, as his first child was born in January, 1822. I imagine that Thompson's error is purely typographical, and that he meant 1821, for it is from a letter of Dr. Hulse to Thompson that we obtain the information concerning his first child, a son.

Upon his graduation Dr. Hulse immediately joined the Navy (about May 1), and on May 12, 1823, he became attached to the U.S.S. *Congress* at Norfolk, Va., in the capacity of Surgeon's Mate, and thus embarked on a career in which he was destined to distinguish himself. The *Congress* soon sailed, and after visiting the West Indies proceeded to Gibraltar, where she arrived the latter part of July, 1823. During this voyage Dr. Hulse suffered much from illness, and he speaks of the tender care given to him by the officers of the vessel. He recovered by the time Gibraltar was reached.

We give herewith a portion of a letter³ written to Benjamin F. Thompson which exhibits an interesting description of Gibraltar at that time:

"It would be presumption in me to attempt to describe to you the wonders of this place after it has employed the full force of the genius of Greece and Rome. Indeed there is wherewith to engage the strongest genius and the boldest fancy. Nature has here wrought magnificently and human effort cannot copy her. The town of Gibraltar is [composed of]

¹ We know that he was studying medicine at Baltimore as early as February, 1821, from a letter written to Benjamin F. Thompson. During December, 1822, Dr. Hulse's health was temporarily impaired through overstudy, and a sea voyage was undertaken to remedy it. After his return he also visited Washington, where an opportunity was afforded him of meeting the President.

² Thompson's "History of Long Island."

³ Letter bears date July 20, 1823.

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small houses of stone and rough plastered, streets narrow crooked and clean, no sidewalks. No comforts for living—the houses dirty from the crumbling to pieces of the walls and blowing of dust from different parts of the rock. The streets constantly crowded by people following their different occupations, of which in this town the stopping place of all nations, there are very many.

“Here you see the world in miniature, Jew, Greek, Spaniard, Moor, English, American and all arrayed in their native costumes. The ass here performs the service for which nature has best calculated him viz.: carrying burdens. Many are constantly employed carrying water over the city from the publick well; he carries three small casks fixed in a pannier. The mule is the draft beast. I never saw so large mules nor so small asses. I should not suppose the town contained more than 6 or 7000 inhabitants, the garrison is between 3 or 4000, the English troops look extremely fine. There is a line of fortifications all along the shore and only one or two landing places, and the entrance is by two gates thro’ walls that appear to me to be 25 or 30 feet thick, there are about 500 cannon mounted they say. This artificial wall defends the city from the sea or bay and in the rear rises the mighty rock of Gibraltar, 12 or 1500 feet, broken with breast-works, parapets, embrasures, which are continued up to the top where there is a castle. The ancients have left us many monuments of their genius cognizable even by the unlettered man and if we could know nothing of them but by the works of art they have left us we should be compelled to place a very high estimation on their talents and industry. The castles in ruins and specimens of architecture which are thought worthy of repair, strike the eye in various directions. There are two Spanish towns in sight from here viz.: Algesiras and St. Roque which we are not now permitted to visit on account of the disturbances in Spain¹—the news you will have ere this reaches you. The French have overrun Spain and are blockading the Spanish king in Cadiz by land and sea. The constitutional-

¹ Ferdinand VII, King of Spain, was forced by a popular uprising to grant a liberal constitution to his subjects. The Holy Alliance (France, Austria, Russia, and Prussia), in favor of the divine right of kings, determined to restore the Spanish ruler’s power, and sent a French army into Spain to accomplish their desires. The Spanish constitutionalists retreated to Cadiz with their king, who was virtually a prisoner. The French proved victorious, released the king, and set him up again with unlimited power.

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ists have not, I believe, altogether proved true to their cause. As there is a difficulty in travelling by land—the captain has determined to take Mr Nelson¹ to Cadiz and land him there. Mr. Rodney¹ and family will stay ashore at Gibraltar till our return here, which will be immediately. We expect to sail for Cadiz tomorrow.

“The English, Dutch and French officers here treat us Americans with the greatest respect. There are here a Dutch fleet of 2 frigates and there is a good deal of intercourse between their officers and ours. Our anchor had not been down 15 minutes when they sent an officer on board with compliments and an offer of services. The English immediately returned our salute with an equal number of guns.

“I have written by different vessels to my mother, wife and father-in-law. I shall write again when I return from Cadiz and from Rio de Janeiro which is our next port of destination.”

After this cruise Dr. Hulse embarked on another taking him to the coast of Africa, the West Indies, and the Gulf of Mexico. He was finally ordered home on January 4, 1824, and after a devious voyage arrived in New York July 16, 1824, on board the U.S.S. *Grampus*. He returned to Baltimore almost immediately, and on August 7 was directed to the Naval Hospital at Gosport, Va. Here Dr. Hulse had a position which gratified him exceedingly, for we know by his correspondence that he did not care for sea duty. He remained at Gosport, in the capacity of Assistant Surgeon of the hospital, for over two years, with the exception of a short tour of duty on board U.S.S. *Hornet* during September, 1825. During this period of his life Dr. Hulse regarded Baltimore, Md., as his home, as well he might, for his wife had come from there and most of his spare time was spent in that city.

We may here relate that the Doctor's rank had been that of Surgeon's Mate, but on May 6, 1825, he was promoted to Surgeon, which was certainly a testimony to his ability and skill. On November 14, 1826, Dr. Isaac Hulse was ordered to the Naval Hospital at Pensacola, Fla., and immediately proceeded thither. At Pensacola Dr. Hulse was destined to acquire his merited reputation as a distinguished medical man, a reputation which

¹ Americans proceeding to diplomatic posts. They had crossed on the *Congress*.

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spread throughout the southern United States and the entire Navy. He was particularly noted for his success in treating the dreaded yellow fever, a scourge which, unfortunately, was more prevalent in those days than at the present time. During his entire sojourn at Pensacola Dr. Hulse was in full charge of the Naval Hospital. In addition he several times occupied the important position of Fleet Surgeon of the West Indies Squadron and of the Home Squadron, as will be related in detail further on in this biography.

As a large part of this book is devoted to Dr. Hulse's activities at Pensacola, it may be wise to give a few historical particulars of the town up to the time of Dr. Hulse's arrival there.

Pensacola, the most important town in western Florida, has been a naval station of the United States for many years. It was founded by the Spaniards in 1696 as a colony in the western part of their territory of Florida, and during a period of one hundred and twenty-five years alternated as a possession of Spain or England, serving as a pawn in the hands of these two European nations, who were not infrequently at war with one another.

During the War of 1812 and afterward, Spain and England were friendly. Florida, and especially Pensacola, was used as a base for English operations against the Americans, the Spanish either being unable or unwilling to observe a neutrality. Affairs became so bad that General Andrew Jackson, American commander-in-chief, was forced to attack the town on two separate occasions. After the termination of the War of 1812, trouble still continued in western Florida, and the Indian tribes constantly warred on the American settlements at the north. The Spanish administration was exceedingly feeble, and again seemed apathetic regarding attacks on the Americans. This state of affairs engaged the attention of the Government at Washington, and it was realized that Florida, in the hands of a foreign power, would always be a potential source of trouble to the United States, and negotiations were begun for the purchase of the territory from Spain.

After a great deal of discussion a treaty was signed, on February 22, 1819, by which Spain agreed to transfer Florida to the United States for the sum of five million dollars and the payment of certain claims. This treaty was ratified by Spain on October 24, 1820, but final ratification was

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not effected at Washington until February 22, 1821. This was the second great land purchase made by our nation, the first being the acquisition of the Louisiana Territory.

The Spaniards generally regarded the colony of Florida as being divided into two parts, unto which they gave the names of East and West Florida. Therefore the ceremonies of transfer had, in effect, a sort of dual aspect, and were held at St. Augustine in the east and Pensacola in the west, these being the outstanding towns in their respective localities. General Jackson was appointed Military Governor of the entire territory of Florida, and shortly after, preparations began to be made for the transfer of flags at Pensacola, under the personal supervision of General Jackson, while the formalities at St. Augustine were under the charge of Adjutant-General Butler.

The eventful day at Pensacola fell on July 17, 1821, and at 4 P.M. Florida became United States territory. Shortly afterward our Government established there a naval station and yard which has been in continuous operation ever since. Barely five years later Dr. Hulse was assigned to the place, and it may be said that his services were contemporary with the beginnings of Pensacola as a naval station.

The Indians, however, were by no means pleased with the exchange of government, and said it was not lawful, because the land was a gift from the Great Spirit to his red children, and not to the Spaniards or the Americans either. Also, the aborigines could perceive, even at this early date, that American rule was not going to be the same thing as the free-and-easy Spanish régime, when the Indians were allowed to do pretty much as they desired provided no Spaniard were harmed in person or property. The discontent engendered by the American occupation smoldered along for a number of years until it finally broke out into the Seminole War in 1835.

By his first wife, Amelia Roberts, Dr. Hulse had the following children: a son, born January, 1822, who died young; Isaac, born January 15, 1824, at Baltimore, Md.; and a daughter, Georgiana A.,¹ who was

¹ Georgiana Hulse always evinced a warm regard for the city of her birth, and spent a considerable part of her life there. She was brought up under the direction of a Miss Thomas, after the death of her mother. Dr. Thomas Roberts, of Baltimore, was her uncle.

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principal of a young ladies' seminary at one time, and something of an authoress, writing under the nom de plume of Mary A. Holmes. She married Rev. Alexander W. McLeod, a Canadian divine. She died at Baltimore, Md., July 2, 1890. The following is her obituary as it appeared in the *New York Sun* of July 3, 1890:

"Mrs. Georgie Hulse McLeod, well known in literary and temperance circles throughout the South, died in Baltimore yesterday. She was the daughter of Dr. Isaac Hulse and was born at Baltimore, Md. She evinced a taste for literature at an early age, and was encouraged by Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney, of Connecticut, who was much interested in her. Dr. Thompson, the historian, of Long Island, was also one of her steadfast friends. While still at school she wrote 'Sunbeams and Shadows' and 'Aunt Minnie's Portfolio,' both published by Appleton & Co. Her later works are 'Ivy Leaves,' published in Halifax, and 'Thine and Mine' and 'Seadrift,' published in New York. She was writing a prohibition story, entitled 'Unprotected Home,' when taken sick. Her husband, who survives her, is the Rev. Alexander W. McLeod, editor of the official organ of the Wesleyan Methodists of the lower provinces. Mrs. McLeod was the secretary of the Women's Christian Temperance Union of Maryland and the Southern secretary for the National Women's Christian Temperance Union."

Mrs. Isaac Hulse died August 2, 1827, while on a voyage from Pensacola to New York, and was buried at sea. On January 10, 1833, Dr. Hulse married, as his second wife, Melania, daughter of Mr. John Innerarity, reputed to be the wealthiest resident of Pensacola at that time. By her he had the following children: John, who, following in his father's footsteps, became a physician; Albert, who lived in some Southern city, probably Pensacola, and who was remembered as a visitor to Long Island on board the schooner commanded by his cousin Captain Simeon Hulse, late of Bellport, L. I. (a son of the Doctor's brother Daniel), who sailed frequently to Southern ports; Emma; and a daughter born in the latter part of 1841 (probably December) and who died during the early part of 1847 from an epidemic fever, after an illness of only four days.

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Dr. Hulse's sister Charity married Lewis Ritch,¹ of Middle Island, L. I., and it is from his grandchildren, Miss Lena Ritch and Mr. Thomas J. Ritch, Jr., of Port Jefferson, L. I., that some details of Dr. Hulse's life have been obtained.

An informant of Mr. R. M. Bayles, the esteemed historian of Suffolk County, states that an oil portrait of Dr. Isaac Hulse used to hang in the home of his brother Daniel Hulse, of Coram, L. I., who died in 1860, and that it later came into the possession of Thomas J. Ritch, Sr., a nephew of the Hulses. Mr. Ritch's children do not know of this alleged portrait, but Miss Lena Ritch has in her possession a small miniature of the Doctor,² which may be the foundation of the oil portrait story.

¹ Supposed to have come from Westchester County, N. Y.

² See frontispiece.

CHAPTER II

CONTROVERSY WITH THE COMMANDING OFFICER AT PENSACOLA—TROUBLE WITH FRANCE

FROM 1826, the year in which Dr. Hulse first went to the Naval Hospital at Pensacola, Fla., up to the time of historian Benjamin F. Thompson's death in 1849, the best source of information regarding his life is his correspondence with Mr. Thompson. Although their meetings were few and far between after the Doctor left Long Island, yet the friendship was kept warm by a correspondence in which both men took delight. Dr. Hulse always considered that to Mr. Thompson was due much of his success in life. Certain it is that the historian encouraged the young student in every way possible, and furthermore helped in a more practical way. The physician was deeply grateful, and as his letters show it very plainly we will say no more on that score. Literary tastes held in common also were manifest, and aided the bond of friendship. It is very plain that Thompson was a sort of connecting link between Long Island and the Doctor, and through this medium he kept in contact with his old friends.

Between 1826 and 1835 we know very little concerning Hulse's life and achievements at his Southern post, for, strange to say, letters are entirely lacking during this period. They evidently have been lost or destroyed, as it is inconceivable that none was written for nine years. Such a lapse is foreign to Dr. Hulse's character and the warm place Thompson had in his heart. A fairly complete series of letters before and after this hiatus is in existence.

On November 3, 1830, he was assigned to the U.S.S. *Peacock*, and his tour of duty on this vessel extended into 1831. On October 14, 1831, he was granted three months' leave, and this date may mark the end of his service on the *Peacock*.

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"Sept. 7, 1832. When Dr. Kearney reports for West Indian Squadron, you will report for duty at the Naval Hospital, Pensacola Fla." This entry in the U. S. Navy record indicates that Dr. Hulse had been filling an assignment with the said squadron.

Under date of January 13, 1835, the letters commence again. Dr. Hulse's thoughts about this time seem to be pretty well exercised over a controversy with the commanding officer of the navy-yard, Captain Wolcott Chauncey. It was all about a horse, and we will let him tell it in his own words:

"U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola,
Jan'y 13, 1835.

"My dear friend,

"You are the man who first introduced me to the world—and it is in the path in which you placed me that I have walked thus far through life. After an interval of more than 20 years, having acquired a reputation upon which solely I depend which I have guarded with more vigilance than life itself I have to call again on you for a trifling service to aid me in sustaining that reputation. I have been assailed by my Commanding officer Capt. Wolcott Chauncey who knows nothing of the value of character at a time previous to which no shadow of censure ever existed against me. He has written a letter secretly to the Secretary of the Navy¹ the entire nature of which I do not know, but Mr. Amos Kendall² in a private letter has given me notice of it. I want but one privilege of a leave of absence from my station for three months, for the purpose of visiting

¹ Mahlon Dickerson, Secretary of the Navy, 1834-36. Mr. Dickerson achieved considerable prominence in public affairs and was Governor of New Jersey, also U. S. Senator from that State. He was of Long Island ancestry. (See "Genealogies of Long Island Families," by the author of this work, page 17.)

² Amos Kendall, journalist and ardent supporter of President Andrew Jackson; Auditor of U. S. Treasury, 1829-35; Postmaster-General, 1835-40. He was a highly educated man of marked attainments, and his opinions were especially valued by the President; indeed, it is said that he possessed greater influence with Jackson than any other single individual. Many of the President's state papers were attributed to his pen. Kendall was a strong partizan and the chief member of the so-called "kitchen cabinet." His influence on Jackson's administration has been admitted by most historians. In later life he was associated with S. F. B. Morse in early telegraph patents, through which he amassed a considerable fortune, a generous share being devoted to philanthropy.

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Washington and I promise to vindicate my honour to the satisfaction of the Department convinced as I am of my own purity. To go in person is indispensably necessary, for here I am tied down. I cannot make a communication to the Department, which does not pass open through my commanders hands and he would not hesitate to detain any that did not seem to his liking.

"I understood you to say you were personally acquainted with Mr. Van Buren.¹ If it will not be asking too much of your good self do me the favour to ask him to procure for me the desired leave so that I may visit the seat of government. It will be very easy for him to procure—it will be proper, for you can assure him from me that it is a season of the year at which the services of the Hospital Surgeon can best be spared, there being rarely any other than a few chronic cases, and Dr. Edwards the Surgeon of the Navy Yard has kindly offered to perform my duty in my absence and add to this there is an assistant Surgeon at the Yard and one at the hospital. All the causes of my wishing leave need not be stated—I have stated but two to the Secretary, viz. to visit my children in Baltimore² and to visit the seat of government where I have business of importance. I have no doubt the Sec'y would grant me leave on my own request but this man will detain my letter. He will also detain the letter of the Sec'y when it arrives—please cause the Sec'y to be requested to give me an unconditional leave and to send it not through my commanding officer.

"If you can effect this object you will do me a great service. This subject has agitated me and affected my spirits to the degree to drive my sleep from me.

"Relying my dear sir, upon your friendship and willingness to serve me I take leave of you for the present and promise to relate the whole story to you when I get to Washington. I pledge you my word also most

¹ Martin Van Buren, eighth President of the United States, 1837-41; Vice-President under Jackson at the time of this letter. One of Jackson's supporters, whom he succeeded as President.

² Children of his first wife. Most of their early life was spent at Baltimore in the care of his deceased wife's relatives.

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solemnly that the object I have to offset is not unworthy either of yourself or Mr. Van Buren.

"I am dear Sir

Affectionately yours,

ISAAC HULSE.

"To Benj'm F. Thompson, Esq.

"Our kindest regards to Mrs. T. and all your amiable family."

And now comes the story—about the horse.

"U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola,

Feby. 25th, 1835.

"My dear Friend—

"Your valued favour of the 3rd inst. so promptly administering consolation to me while in trouble has penetrated me afresh with your goodness and disinterestedness. Altho the object has not yet been gained, (that object having recently much diminished in importance) your readiness to serve me is equally appreciated. It is due time I should tell you the story. The Hospital is situated at a distance from the Navy Yard, consequently since 1828 a horse has been hired for the purpose of giving facility of communication between the Hospital and Yard—\$6 a month has been allowed for the hire. It has frequently happened that a horse could not be had at the price. To obviate the inconvenience I enquired of the then Commanding Officer, soon after I took charge, if he thought there was any impropriety in my purchasing and hiring to the Hospital my own horse. He thought not, and I purchased. My sole object was to prevent the Hospital ever being in want of a horse. My new Commander, Capt. Wolcott Chauncey saw difficulty in it and when I presented an acct. for a quarter's hire (not in my own name) he retained the acct. a month and returned it to me saying it would not be allowed. Mr. Kendall wrote me a private letter saying that Capt. Chauncey had sent the acct. to the Secy. of the Navy with the intelligence that the 'horse was my own.' I had reason to believe that some improper suggestions might also have been made and I thought it better that I should come on at once.

"This Capt. Chauncey has become inimical to me in consequence of the great efforts I made last fall to induce and almost to compel him to desist from sending the *Grampus*' crew on board that infected vessel. After they had been removed to the shore to enable them to enjoy pure air he sent

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them on board to work by day and to keep night watches at night till every man except two or three took the disease. My official letters on that occasion spoke too plain for him.

"I must observe that the Regulations of the Navy only forbid medical officers supplying or contracting for, directly or indirectly, any *Medicines or Stores*. But there was no regulation against my contracting for the horse. Mr. Kendall demurred simply because the acct. was not in my own name. I have since received a letter from him in which he says the Secretary thinks I can make any explanations which I may think it due to my feelings to make, as well in correspondence as personally. I think it proper also to state to you that the present Commandant was, at the time he rejected my acct., approving accts. known to have been based in a similar way in favour of the Purser of this Station. Ever since my knowledge of the Station the purser has been allowed to furnish supplies to the Navy and invariably the accts. have been presented and audited in the name of his clerk. Knowing these practises to exist I followed them rather from custom than from any other motive.

"My horse was rode by myself in the service of the Government—also by the Assistant Surgeon and by the attendants of the Hospital whenever it was necessary to send messages. He was placed at one time under the special orders of the Assistant Surgeon by the Commandant of the Yard for the performance of a special duty.

"Since I last wrote you I have received a note from Commodore Dallas,¹ who had accepted and afterwards declined the command of a squadron that is to be formed in the Chinese seas. He states that he had applied for me to the Secy. of the Navy, to be his Fleet Surgeon. He now asks if I will cruise with him in a Frigate in case there is a French War.² My reply will be yes.

“excuse haste

“Your warmly attached friend
ISAAC HULSE”

¹ Commodore Alexander James Dallas, born 1791, died June 3, 1844, at Callao, Peru. He saw considerable active service in the War of 1812. His father, of the same name, was Secretary of the Treasury under President James Madison.

² See page 25.

Naval Hostilities

Pensacola March 5th 1855

My dear Friend, I hasten to communicate to you a piece of intelligence which I know must be gratifying to you, for you have taken a warm interest in the subject. I have a letter from Com^d Dallas at Washington, who says the Secretary of the Navy gave him the assurance that he was perfectly satisfied with me in regard to the horse. I have made no explanation as yet to the Secretary myself; the explanation was made by Com^d Dallas from information received from me & from his knowledge of affairs on his station. The same assurances were also given to Com^d Dallas by Mr. Kendall. Of course these gentlemen have drawn their inference as to the motive which occasioned the attack upon me, and the circumstances will stand in my favour should any future attempt be made by any unworthy persecutor to make me feel his vengeance. I shall make my statement to the Secretary ~~to~~ accompanied by certificates to be filed at the Department as an offset to the report whatever it is, and for the information of any future Secretary. Mr. Kendall had already informed me that the Secretary had decided that my services could not be spared from the Station, and observed at the time that any explanation which I thought it due to my feelings to make could as well be done by correspondence as in person.

I wrote you on the 25th Ult^o and gave you a history of the whole affair, with the ground of my defence. Com^d Dallas was acquainted with it as it commenced under his command. He saw the expediency of it from the great difficulty we had in getting a

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Dr. Hulse's vindication by the Naval authorities of any wrong-doing in regard to hiring the horse is contained in the following epistle:

"U. S. Naval Hospital,
Pensacola, March 5th, 1835.

"My dear friend,

"I hasten to communicate to you a piece of intelligence which I know must be gratifying to you, for you have taken a warm interest in the subject. I have a letter from Com'd Dallas at Washington who says the Secretary of the Navy gave him the assurance that he was perfectly satisfied with me in regard to the horse. I have made no explanation as yet to the Secretary myself; the explanation was made by Com'd Dallas from information received from me and from his knowledge of affairs on this station. The same assurances were also given to Com'd Dallas by Mr. Kendall. Of course those gentlemen have drawn their inference as to the motive which occasioned the attack upon me, and the circumstances will stand in my favour should any future attempt be made by my unworthy persecutor to make me feel his vengeance. I shall make my statement to the Secretary accompanied by certificate to be filed at the Department as an offset to the report whatever it is, and for the information of any future Secretary. Mr. Kendall had already informed me that the Secretary had decided that my services could not be spared from the Station, and observed at the time that any explanation which I thought it due to my feelings to make could as well be done by correspondence as in person.

"I wrote you on the 25th ult'o and gave you a history of the whole affair, with the ground of my defence. Com'd Dallas was acquainted with it as it commenced under his command. He saw the expediency of it from the great difficulty we had in getting a horse always, at the am't of hire allowed.

"I am not certain whether, in my last to you I mentioned that I had escaped a cruise to the China seas, the squadron having been offered to Com'd Dallas and accepted by him. He applied for me as fleet surgeon. He declined the Command, however on account of the small force, he insisting that a Frigate ought to be given for the flag ship,—especially in the present state of our affairs. He is impressed with the belief that war must

DR. ISAAC HULSE

ensue with the French in which case he will command a frigate and I have promised to accompany him.

“For my part I don’t see how we are to get over the French question and maintain a proper national feeling without war i.e. in the event of the final refusal of the French Chambers to grant the indemnity. The insult of the flag loses nothing of its flagrancy by its having been offered 25 years ago and during a different generation and dynasty. That insult is persevered in by the powers that be in France and is made fresh by their wantonly essaying to destroy the work of 25 years’ negotiation and by their disavowing a treaty which has been solemnly ratified by both parties and faithfully observed by us.

“I find I view the case differently from many people, but I view it abstractedly from interest and from party feeling.

“As an act of policy purely, I believe it would be most salutary to the country. It appears we are in the awful dilemma of having a surplus revenue of 9,000,000 which no legislation can diminish for the next 7 years, and in great danger of civil war or a separation of the Union from the quarrels which are to ensue among politicians as to what is to be done with this vast amount of treasure. What an anomaly! A government to be cursed with too much wealth! God send that at all events the country may be safe. Let me hear what you have to say on this subject.

“I have a piece of land near Setauket (30 Acres) which had better be disposed of as I am not aware there is any one to attend to paying the taxes. It is covered with a growth of timber ten years old. Will you do me the favour to enquire if it can be sold to advantage? If so I will, if you please, make you my att’y for the purpose. The original deed of Jesse Smith to my father is in my possession here. The Piping tree stands on the tract and the road from Setauket to Coram cuts the north end of it. The road from Justus Overton’s house to Setauket forming the western boundary. Perhaps in these times of railroads men of money may purchase such lands by way of speculation. If it can be sold to advantage will you please direct me how to proceed. I think it is 2½ miles from Setauket and the same direction from Drown-meadow.¹

¹ Old name for Port Jefferson, L. I.

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

"With best regards of myself and wife to you and your family
"I remain, most sincerely and affectionately yours, ISAAC HULSE."

The most important point touched upon in the foregoing letter is Dr. Hulse's reference to trouble with France. This is a forgotten incident in our history, but one which created considerable excitement at the time.

As is generally known, our shipping suffered considerable damage at French hands during the Napoleonic wars. French cruisers frequently seized American ships and otherwise caused us trouble. The United States occupied an unenviable position between two warring powers, France and England, both endeavoring to use the young nation as a weapon or bludgeon against the other. This state of affairs finally brought on the War of 1812 with England, and our victories also served to show France that we must not be trifled with. However, our damage claims against France had been notoriously neglected, and it was not until 1831 that a satisfactory treaty was arranged calling for a payment to the United States of five million dollars in six annual instalments.

The first payment was due on February 2, 1833. Fancy this country's surprise when the French minister of finance refused payment on the equivocal ground that no appropriation had been made for it. Despite King Louis Philippe's intercession, the French Chambers refused an appropriation in the face of a solemn agreement to pay. President Andrew Jackson, "Old Hickory," was not a man to be played with in this manner, and in his message to Congress transmitted in December, 1834, he recommended that a bill be passed authorizing the capture of French vessels in sufficient number to pay the amount due. The President's statement was tantamount to a threat of war, and for a time it looked as if we were going to get it. The French Government was furious and demanded an apology, failing which they in turn threatened hostilities. As Andrew Jackson was not a man to make many apologies for his acts, war seemed imminent. Fortunately, Great Britain offered some good advice to her neighbor France, which resulted in the payment of the claim without further delay. The effect of Jackson's firm attitude in the matter was not lost upon the European nations, and at home his stalwart patriotism called forth another burst of hurrahs for "Old Hickory."

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During August and September, 1835, Dr. Hulse was granted leave of absence, which was utilized by visiting his children Isaac and Georgiana and his deceased wife's relatives in Baltimore, also a visit to Thompson. On his return he penned the following letter to Mr. Thompson:

"U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola

Oct. 18th 1835.

"My dear Friend—

"I ought to have apprised you ere this of my safe return to my family¹ and to my post. I reached here on the 26th ultimo and I have been variously engaged, moving again into my quarters, preparing the estimates of the Hospital for the next year etc. etc.

"I called on the Secretary of the Navy to know whether I stood justified at the Department in the controversy I had had with my commanding officer. He assured me that I stood perfectly fair with the Department, extended my leave of absence so far as to allow me to come out in a public vessel (the *Constellation*) which was to sail not before the first of October. I preferred coming out sooner at my own expense for the purpose of enjoying my family. While at Washington I was confidentially informed that Capt. Chauncey was to be removed from the command of this Navy Yard. When I arrived out here he had made all his preparations to leave and his successor was named. This I consider an additional proof of my justification and I exhibit it to you because you are entitled to know it. But alas poor mortality! Capt. Chauncey has fallen a victim to his intemperate habits. He died of a dropsy of the brain after an illness of a very few days. A fit of delirium tremens degenerated into this disease which terminated his existence. We bore him to his last resting place three days since. Peace be to the dead! While I was with you the Fleet Surgeon of the West India Squadron applied for leave of absence and it was thought he wished to be relieved. I was nominated by Comdr. Dallas to succeed and the Department had consented, but when they heard again from Dr. Osborne they learned that it was only a temporary leave that he wished. As he had not served the usual term the Department could not remove him but said that Dr. Osborne and myself might exchange whenever we pleased

¹ Second wife and children at Pensacola.

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—as it is the wish of Comdr. Dallas, it is probable the exchange will take place between us ere long. Should it not be the case I may be ordered to some other service as my term of three years on this station will be completed on the 9th of December next.

“My new house near the Hospital is about being completed. It is a very handsome double house, 4 rooms on a floor, passage through the center, gallery running all around supported by turned columns. The site is a beautiful one having a view of the entrance of the bay, fortifications, Navy Yard etc.—beyond St. Rosa Island an extensive view of the sea and coast.

“The sunny south is exceedingly congenial to me, my health became better as I changed my climate. While at Long Island I was miserable, the air was too keen for me. I breathed with difficulty and could scarcely speak without coughing—here I can not only speak but sing and if Miss Thompson¹ were here with her piano with voice accompanying I flatter myself I could trust my voice without disturbing the harmony of the sweet sounds.

“I beg you to remember me most kindly to Mrs. T., Miss T. and Miss G., to Henry² and he of Bell Port.³ I have already made my better half familiar with you all and her heart is with mine to offer our most cordial salutations. Please present my best respects to Mr. Barroll⁴ and family.

“I wish your business or your pleasure might some day call you out here. I would try to fascinate you so as to decide you in favour of the south. Come—the facility of traveling is so great—a gentleman arrived here the other day in 8 days from Washington via Charleston.

“Come here and invest in the rich lands of Mississippi the balance of them will be in market this winter, you may be a Nabob in a few years!

“I have heard nothing from my mother nor Mr. Ritch⁵ since I left. Adieu.

“Yours most truly and affectionately

“ISAAC HULSE

“Benj. F. Thompson Esq.”

¹ Daughter of Mr. Thompson.

² Son of Mr. Thompson.

³ Probably his nephew Captain Simeon Hulse. (See page 10.)

⁴ William H. Barroll, a prominent resident of Hempstead, L. I.

⁵ Mr. Lewis Ritch, of Middle Island, who married Dr. Hulse's sister Charity.

CHAPTER III

TREATMENT OF YELLOW FEVER—SEMINOLE WAR—TROUBLE BETWEEN FRANCE AND MEXICO

THE next letter is the first intimation we have that Dr. Hulse was mastering the dreaded scourge, yellow fever. Out of eighty cases he lost only nine, which was an extremely good average and served to direct public attention to his labors. His successful treatment of this disease is Dr. Isaac Hulse's chief bid for fame, and full honor must be accorded to him for his achievements and for the bravery and devotion to duty he exhibited in treating the poor unfortunates who were suffering from this highly contagious malady.

Yellow fever has been banished from our shores, due to modern medical science, but it must be remembered that in Dr. Hulse's day it was dreaded more than any other epidemic disease. The death rate was always high, and in some localities the population was seriously diminished, and people left homes and property to escape the ravages of the plague. The southern portion of our country was especially open to attack, and an extremely virulent type visited New Orleans and other gulf ports, including Pensacola.

Thus it will be seen that Dr. Hulse's work was of great importance. In 1841¹ a still more serious epidemic was handled by the Doctor, with even better results than are exhibited in the following letter. To gain an idea of what yellow fever meant to the inhabitants of our Southern cities, one should read the history of New Orleans. When this is done, nothing more need be said concerning the plague and the need of combating it.

“U. S. Naval Hospital
Pensacola, 12th April 1836.

“My dear Friend,

“Your esteemed letter has been received and not lost sight of—I regretted to be informed by it that you have suffered under severe indispo-

¹ See page 32.

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sition. I trust that this will find your health perfectly re-established. Since my last to you I have applied to the Secretary of the Navy for service in the West India Squadron, and have this day received his answer in which he says I shall be relieved from the Hospital as soon as a suitable successor can be detailed. On the 31st ulto. I made to the Navy Department a recapitulation of the results of my practise in this Hospital for 3 years and 4 months—number of patients admitted 298—number of deaths 13. Of the deaths 9 were from yellow fever, two from consumption, one rupture of blood vessel and one inflammation of the brain. Of the two cases of consumption one was an officer who came here from the north moribund.

“Of the 9 deaths from fever two were marines from the Navy Yard who had mania a potu at the time of their attack and were treated 3 or 4 days in their barracks before they were sent to me, and 2 were treated 48 hours on board ship previous to being transferred to me and were finally sent at an unfavourable period of their disease. The whole number of cases of yellow fever was about 80. It is possible I shall soon be employed in the West India Squadron commanded by a chivalric officer who is a friend of mine.¹ The prospect of my bringing Mrs. H. to Long Island this summer is now rather obscure. I hope however we shall one day visit you—I have a very strong desire to present her to you and Mrs. Thompson.

“I am glad the war with France was only on paper, altho’ if need be I should have been among the foremost on board ship.

“We have gained by the contest as the account now stands and more abroad than at home. There is not a nation in Europe but has admired the stand that has been maintained by President Jackson, and many, no doubt have wondered at the boldness of it, not being aware of our importance and power. I trust that peace will long continue with its numberless blessings.

“We have nothing recent from the scene of Indian Warfare tho’ we are not far distant from it. I had a letter from Major Wilson, Mrs. H’s brother in law, shortly after the 7 days battle of General Gaines² (of which

¹ Commodore Dallas.

² General Edmund Pendleton Gaines served in the War of 1812, Seminole War, and Mexican War.

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he was a part). The chiefs had proposed to treat and Genl. G. on the 5th March had sent a deputation to talk with them. While they were talking Genl. Clinch's¹ force came up and the flankers, seeing the Indians, fired on them when they escaped, and since that time up to the 12th March had not returned. It is seen that Genl. Scott² is on a march after them and probably the final blow will soon be struck.

"When your leisure will permit, it will gratify me much if you will occasionally write to me always addressed to Pensacola. I shall cruise in the West India Squadron and shall never be absent from here more than 3 or 4 months at a time.

"I took my resolution for sea-service because the moment is favorable and because I wish to gain further claims to a shore station which I hope to obtain again after performing a cruise. This station is all-important to me on account of health and I would gladly by arduous service, if I can perform it, earn the privilege of another tour of duty here.

"Perchance this letter may not immediately reach you, but I suspect you will defer your departure for Washington till the weather becomes settled. While there I should be happy to hear from you; I fear you will not be gratified, as the House and Senate are presenting scenes, anything but agreeable. Better they should go home and leave the business of the nation unsettled.

"I remain as ever with the most affectionate attachment

"Your friend

"ISAAC HULSE"

The Indian warfare spoken of in the preceding letter is known as the Seminole War, and arose from the efforts of the Government to drive the Seminole Indians out of Florida and move them to lands allotted for them in the West. It was a long and bloody war, lasting from 1835 to 1842, and cost the Government a large sum of money. Most of the Indians were

¹ General Duncan Lamont Clinch served in the War of 1812 and the Seminole War.

² General Winfield Scott, the well-known hero of the War of 1812 and the conqueror of Mexico. He was the Whig candidate for President in 1852, but was defeated by Franklin Pierce.

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finally induced to leave and the territory pacified. The battle mentioned in the letter was one of the preliminary conflicts in a long-drawn-out struggle. Dr. Hulse's estimate, that "the final blow will soon be struck," was incorrect.

On September 11, 1837, Dr. Hulse received his appointment as Fleet Surgeon, attached to the West India Squadron, and served in that capacity until September 10, 1840, when he was again placed in charge of the hospital at Pensacola. Headquarters of the squadron were at Pensacola, and to this port the squadron repaired about every three or four months. Commodore Dallas was in command, and as indicated in the letters he and Dr. Hulse were close and appreciative friends, and we may conclude that the Doctor's tour of duty with the squadron was pleasing to him.

The next letter from Dr. Hulse relates to a short and rather theatrical war between France and Mexico. In 1837 Anastasio Bustamante, a strong member of the Clerical, or Church, party, became president of Mexico. Considerable opposition to his administration appeared throughout the country, however, and in order to divert the minds of the people from a possible civil war and to arouse patriotism, he conceived the idea of embroiling Mexico into a war with France, which would serve to bring up the always popular subjects of national honor and defense of the realm against a foreign invader, questions sure to arouse the romantic nature of a Latin people and incidentally make Bustamante's administration rather popular, to say the least.

In accordance with this policy, some mild and justifiable French claims against Mexico were repulsed with the utmost insolence, and all French nationals were ordered from the country. Despite the well-known and genuine desire for a peaceable settlement on the part of France, President Bustamante continued to inflame Mexican minds against the alleged enemy in every imaginable way, even going so far as to disinter the remains of a national hero, Iturbide,¹ and parade them through the streets of the City of Mexico, accompanied by lavish military and religious display. The Mex-

¹ Augustin Iturbide took a prominent part in making Mexico independent of Spain. When independence was declared he was given the title of Emperor of Mexico, in 1822, and ruled until a republic was set up, when he was executed. He was regarded as a hero and martyr by the Clerical party.

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ican Congress complacently supported Bustamante's actions, and in a burst of patriotism proclaimed war against France.

This opera-bouffe line of conduct took place in 1838 and was answered by France sending a fleet of war-ships to Mexican waters under Admiral Baudin, to enforce compliance with her entirely justifiable demands and to avenge the recent insults. An attack was made upon Vera Cruz, defended by the Mexican general Santa Anna, so well known for his exploits in the Texan War of Independence and the later Mexican War; in fact, it was in defending this attack that Santa Anna lost his leg, a misfortune which he turned to good account by posing as a wounded martyr, and which added somewhat to his rather eccentric character. The beginning of actual fighting, and the advice given to him by the British Ambassador,¹ served to bring Bustamante to his senses and to dissuade him from further opposition to the French demands. Accordingly a treaty acceptable to France was executed, and the war ended. A further reason for the cessation of hostilities lay in the fact that the Mexican insurgents at Tampico were not at all influenced by President Bustamante's French war and continued to arouse opposition to his administration. The urgent necessity for suppressing them before any great amount of damage could be done was now uppermost in the president's mind, relegating all other matters to the background.

With these explanatory paragraphs, Dr. Hulse's next letter can be intelligently read. This struggle should not be confused with the French invasion of 1861-65, in which France sought to set up an empire in Mexico.

"Pensacola, Nov. 30th, 1838.

"My dear friend,

"Your very welcome letter of the 10th of October was in waiting for me on my return here from a cruise down the Gulf.

"I went in the Flag Ship down to Tampico and Vera Cruz, the object of which visit was to ascertain, if possible, the exact position of affairs between the French and Mexicans. We had the satisfaction to meet the French Admiral who arrived at Vera Cruz on the 26th Oct. (the day before we sailed thence). The Commodore had a conference with him who stated

¹ Mr. Pakenham.

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distinctly what he intended to do. He dispatched an officer immediately to the City of Mexico to make a final demand of the government, and if the Mexicans still resisted the demands of the French, he was to bombard the fort immediately and make an attack upon the City of Vera Cruz. It was only the van of his forces that we saw viz. 2 large Frigates and 6 large Brigs. The rest of the fleet was on its passage consisting of ships of the line, bomb vessels, steam ships &c. Admiral Baudin to whom this expedition is entrusted is a fine looking man, about 55 years of age, highly intelligent, speaks English with ease, and when speaking of the Mexicans has an air of great determination. He has lost his right arm, but to the eye of a military man he is compensated for it by the cross of the Legion of Honour which he wears on his left breast.

"The Mexicans at Vera Cruz are well prepared to receive an attack, having a garrison of about 4000 men in the fortress and city. Troops from the country can be speedily collected on the appearance of an assault. The town is encircled by strong walls, strengthened by bastions provided with cannon and if the soldiers will stand to their guns it will cost the French a good deal of blood to get possession.

"I am rather inclined to the opinion that the Mexicans will accommodate the matter, not by intimidation, but from intestine difficulties. The country is in a state of revolution and neither the troops nor the people will go far to support any measure of the present government. The increase of the sum demanded, however, may have weight in deciding them to resist, for I understand that the French have added to the former sum the cost of their expeditions.

"We arrived here on the 14th inst. and various duties have thus far prevented me from answering your very friendly letter.

"I am happy to hear that you are devoting your leisure more particularly to literary pursuits. The work¹ you are preparing will be full of interest to all classes and particularly to the natives of Long Island and I have no doubt you will rescue many very curious and valuable facts from oblivion equally illustrative of Indian character and of the hardihood of our ancestors. I shall be happy to assist in disposing of some copies should

¹ The first edition of Thompson's "History of Long Island," published in 1839.

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you think proper to send them out here. The demand at Pensacola for any book is trifling but I will write to Mr. Kellogg and Mr. Woodruff of Mobile in favour, should you think proper to make them a consignment. A few copies, say 25, can be disposed of here.

“My wife and children are in fine health, and reciprocate kindest remembrances. Those in Baltimore¹ are well as appears by letters which awaited me from both of them on my arrival here.

“To the question, why go to sea? I am obliged to reply, my health is still too delicate to allow me to give myself up to the drudgery of private practice, and independently, I have not an income sufficient for the wants of my family. If I remain in the service I must expect to go to sea again before I can reasonably ask for a Hospital station and going as Fleet Surgeon. I have the easiest as well as most profitable situation. Connected with the privations and sacrifices of this kind of life, I have, lately during the cruise been brought to reflect much upon the pleasure to be derived by me and the benefits that might result to him if I could have my son Isaac with me. It would cheer me in a lonely hour and aid in removing my thoughts from the waste of ocean to the recollection of sunnier hours, and stimulate me to employ a leisure which would otherwise be a void in training up his mind to manly virtues. You will perceive by the enclosed letter from Isaac that our desires on this point are mutual. I have therefore determined to ask the President² for a Midshipman’s warrant for him, it is the only capacity in which I could have him on board ship in an honourable station. Should I be fortunate enough to succeed I will devote myself to instructing him and shall endeavour to make him an ornament to the profession. He was born in Baltimore, Jan 15th, 1824. I was absent at the time on service, having received orders only 13 days previous to join the Frigate *Congress* then lying at Norfolk said to be under orders to proceed immediately to sea.

“The present letter is not offered as a proof of precocity or of genius. His education has been anxiously pressed, but he has been raised under the indulgent care of a grandmother and I do not think his advancement has been so great as if I had superintended it myself; he is however, a mathe-

¹ Children of his first marriage, Isaac and Georgiana.

² President Martin Van Buren.

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matician and in that respect has promising talents for the Navy. His correct feelings and goodness of heart are qualities which you will no doubt accord to him on the perusal of his letter which I am confident has met no eye but his previous to its reaching me. If you have the will and the ability (and I believe you have both) to aid me in this matter you will again prove yourself the benefactor of both father and son.

"My kindest regards to Mrs. Thompson and all your family.

"I remain ever most affectionately yours,

"ISAAC HULSE.

"I shall write to the President and Secretary of the Navy¹ in about 5 or 6 days.—I. H."

The following letter gives us further evidence of Dr. Hulse's extraordinary skill in treating fevers. This time it was a malignant epidemic fever, and his success in dealing with it is testified to in no uncertain manner by the inhabitants of Pensacola.

"Pensacola, Nov. 2nd 1839.

"My dear Friend,

"I am almost ashamed to recollect that it is more than a month since I received your most interesting letter of the 9th Sept. and that it has thus long remained unanswered. Even now I should scarcely be allowed the time to pen you an epistle were I not labouring under a fever and confined to bed. Within six weeks Pensacola has been visited with an epidemic fever which in some instances has showed signs of considerable malignity and my services have been in such demand as scarcely to allow me time for ordinary rest and sleep. The disease had begun to extend to the officers and seamen on shipboard and the Commodore² judged it advisable to get the Squadron under way and go outside for the purpose of changing the atmosphere and removing the chances of mortality within his command. He went to sea on Sunday last with the intention of cruising about two weeks and returning. In leaving me behind he has yielded to the

¹ J. K. Paulding, an author and statesman of considerable note, a descendant of one of the captors of the British Major André hung as a spy in the Revolution.

² Commodore Dallas.

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wishes of the people of Pensacola and to his own humane disposition; for the place was indifferently supplied with medical aid. The cool weather has made its appearance and the disease has subsided almost entirely. Up to this date I have attended 140 cases of fever and lost five. I am now sick with cold and a slight pleuritic affection, but hope to be out tomorrow. My fees have amounted to \$1200 in a little upwards of six weeks.

"I scarcely know how to express my feelings to you on the unexpected and unmerited honour you have conferred on me in the mention you have made of me in your work.¹

"I feel perfectly conscious that my acquirements are at this moment so far short of what they ought to be had I continued in the pursuit of knowledge with the same ardour with which I laboured till I graduated, that I feel guilty to myself when I see myself held up as a pattern for others. However your partiality for me has led you to this act and it has showed me what I ought to be rather than what I am and I shall take fire from it again as I often have done from your own spirit communicated in the course of your extensive and valued correspondence with me.

"It is to yourself that I owe much of what I am and it would be but fair that a public acknowledgement should in some way or other be made of it and if I dont get too lazy when I get into retirement, I may yet show your name in some work of my own.

"I long to see your book and if you can have it forwarded to me direct care of Jerrison & Foster, Pensacola, or through Mr. Kellogg of Mobile, I will gladly take 20 copies and send a draft for the same through our bank on one of the city banks of New York provided you will inform me in whose favour I am to draw. As I shall go to sea with the Squadron in two or three weeks from this time to be absent three months, I will ask you to wait till about the 1st or 10th of Feby. before you send or advise me of having sent the books.

.

"Your notice of my mother² is exceedingly gratifying to me, I have the strongest wish to see her but it is at present almost impossible. The

¹ Thompson's "History of Long Island."

² *Ibid.*

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Commodore says he shall use his exertions to have the Squadron sent north next summer, if it comes I shall have time to pay you all a visit—and really, when I come back to Long Island it seems a good deal like coming back to life after being dead.

“Isaac is still at school 4 miles from Baltimore at the Academy of the Rev. Dr. Waters. He is pleased with his situation and gives me satisfactory evidences of his improvement. He has set his heart on entering the Navy as a midshipman and I applied nearly a year ago for his appointment. Mr. Paulding¹ says his application is on file and I fear much it will continue to remain there.

.

“I remain constantly yours

“ISAAC HULSE”

¹ James K. Paulding, Secretary of the Navy.

CHAPTER IV

FURTHER SUCCESS WITH YELLOW FEVER—ACTIVITIES AT PENSACOLA—MEXICAN WAR—DEATH AT PENSACOLA

As stated previously, Dr. Hulse's tour of duty as Fleet Surgeon to the West India Squadron terminated on September 10, 1840. For most of the time during the next six months he was on leave of absence. On April 12, 1841, he was again ordered to take charge of the Naval Hospital at Pensacola, Fla., and during the latter part of the year that city was again visited with a yellow fever epidemic of very serious proportions. Again Dr. Hulse's skill manifested itself, and in such a way as to call forth a letter of commendation from the Secretary of the Navy—an unusual recognition for a surgeon to receive. We will not animadvert any further but let the letter speak for itself; it is one of the most interesting of the series and exhibits Dr. Isaac Hulse in his prime as a distinguished medical man.

“U. S. Naval Hospital,
“Pensacola, 30th Nov. 1841.

“My dear friend:

“I feel myself much a delinquent for having so long neglected you, it has been averse to inclination to do so but time has been stealing along and I find more than a year has elapsed since I have had any communication with one to whom my heart tells me I am warmly attached and about whom my mind is more or less occupied almost every day of my life. The agreeable interchange of sentiment which marked our occupations during several years of our lives frequently rises fresh in my recollection and I am led to wonder that the habit of silence towards you has been allowed to grow upon me. My late duties have been such as almost to forbid a rational correspondence

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with any one, my mind and body being called into full exercise at this Hospital in an epidemic Yellow Fever. Since the 30th of August I have had under my charge 151 cases of that disease besides many cases of various kinds. The French Squadron in this port has not escaped; after having treated on board their ships 14 cases and lost five they began to compare the success of the French surgeons with mine and the French commandant petitioned to Commodore Dallas to send their sick to this Hospital under my charge. They sent me 18 cases of whom I lost but two. Of our own cases in No. 138 I lost 11. I think I might have saved one or two more had the patients not been injured in their transportation to the Hospital, in some instances under unfavorable circumstances. The symptoms of the disease were so marked as to stamp it unequivocally as Yellow Fever, a majority of the fatal cases being attended with black vomit. My success has been considered remarkable and I have been complimented on it by a letter from the Hon.^{ble} Secretary. I communicate this to you with some pride, because I know you have always expected much from me and I believe have estimated my qualities more highly than they deserve: And when an occasion arrives in which I have it in my power to command myself to such friends as yourself who have ever taken such deep interest in me I feel myself bound to use some exertion that their expectations may not be disappointed. If on this occasion my professional reputation has acquired something, I feel it is for such men as yourself that I have earned it. What care I for the thousands who know nothing of my circumstances, and of whose good or bad opinion I am both indifferent and independent.

“All this about myself, yet you will pardon it in perceiving the notice. I took charge here on the 1st of May last and am probably fixed here for some years to come should life and health continue. If I can be assured of occasionally being gratified by a line from you it will make here and there a green spot in hope’s virtue, for besides the old attachment which I have, which can never die, it is both refreshing to believe that you have not forgotten me and to receive a missive from one who is so identified with the land where I first existed.

“Please make my kindest regards acceptable to Mrs. Thompson, to

DR. ISAAC HULSE

Henry and to every member of your amiable family, and be assured of my devoted and unalterable attachment.

“ISAAC HULSE.

“Benj. F. Thompson, Esq.

“Isaac and Georgiana are with me, and desire to be kindly remembered to you.
I. H.”

In October, 1842, Dr. Hulse published an article on yellow fever in the *Maryland Medical and Surgical Journal* which was spoken of favorably by the medical fraternity.

Extracts from a letter written to Thompson under date of December 17, 1842:

“I shall look with great interest for your new edition¹ of the History of Long Island. I am fully aware that its value will be greatly increased. The materials which you obtained during your travels through New England will be interesting and will place many curious facts relating to the early history of our country in the hands of readers who have not hitherto had the means of obtaining them.”

“I still remain at this Hospital and since the establishment of a Medical Bureau at Washington my labours have been greatly augmented. The whole is now in my charge without any surveillance of the Commandant of the Station. All the correspondence of the Bureau, the commissariat of the establishment, government, etc., devolves on me. The accounts are not the least laborious part of the business.”

“My son Isaac is my Steward, a youth now nearly 19 years old and well grown. Georgiana is also with us and so is Miss Thomas who did much towards raising her—besides we have four children² two sons and two daughters, the youngest nearly one year old. I have at the Hospital a very able assistant Dr. Tait, which circumstance has enabled me to pay a short visit to New Orleans whence I have just returned. The labour required me to perform by the Bureau is chiefly done at the end of the month.”

¹ Second edition of the History, published in 1843.

² By his second wife.

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The balance of the correspondence pertains to affairs at Pensacola, happenings in Dr. Hulse's family, and further evidences of the strong friendship between Dr. Isaac Hulse, naval surgeon, and Benjamin F. Thompson, public man and historian—both appreciated each other's achievements.

“Pensacola, Oct. 31st, 1844.

“My very dear and ancient friend—

“Your letter of Sept. 5th, which I know not how to prize sufficiently high reached me while on a sick bed to which I have until within a few days, been confined since the 25th of August last.

“This accounts for the failure of an immediate response as your letter deserved and as I was anxious to give. The disease with which I was afflicted as well as every member of my family, is a new one in this part of the world and is the same as that which was met with in South Florida¹ by the Surgeons of the Army and was by them very appropriately denominated Malignant Intermittent. The strength under an attack of this malady is prostrated in an inconceivably short space of time and to an extreme degree—relapses are frequent and some persons have been confined three months. It has extended to nearly all the inmates of the Hospital but happily there has been no mortality. Under its influence I have become much emaciated and debilitated—the meninges of the brain in my case were involved. The last two or three nights we have had frost and it is presumed the malaria which gave origin to the disease is extinct. Whether all these sufferings which I am called to experience are or are not calculated to shorten the period of existence allotted to me I know not, neither does the contemplation of the subject give me so much concern as it did in former years—death becomes less and less formidable the more nearly it approaches.

“The same cause which has retarded the appearance of this letter has prevented me from writing to your friend Dr. Garratt as you requested. It is now probably too late, and if you are still in possession of his address, be pleased to say there is no possible chance for success in his profession in Pensacola. The place has greatly diminished instead of increasing in population during the last ten years and within my knowledge half a dozen physicians of excellent abilities have unsuccessfully attempted to establish

¹ Refers to the Seminole War, spoken of on page 24.

DR. ISAAC HULSE

themselves here. The majority of the population are in circumstances quite indigent. Add to this, among those who are possessed of a competency our naval surgeons are generally visitors, and practise gratuitously. Should Dr. Garratt ever come near my domicile it will afford me great pleasure to serve him to the utmost of my ability.

"I rejoice to hear of the production of the second edition of your History of Long Island, because I know it must be a source of great satisfaction to yourself. The work has come from your hands like the Georgics of Virgil with the last touch of the master. Its value is greatly enhanced also by the portrait of the author and the map. I shall seize the first opportunity to procure the work.

.

"Mrs. H. and our small children are now at my father in law's house. Georgiana and Miss Thomas are keeping our house at the Hospital; we are making preparations to go down in three or four days. I will request Georgiana to write to you agreeably to your request. Isaac has left us and went to Baltimore in July last. I received a letter from him yesterday in which he says he is about to obtain the Stewardship of the Medical Department of Fort McHenry.

"On the first of May next I shall have completed a tour of four consecutive years at this Hospital, which is one year more than it is usual with the Department to allow. If I am not then relieved I shall probably ask for relief and with a view of recruiting my health I have a scheme in view—which is to go to France and spend 3 or 4 months in Paris for the purpose of following the course of M. Louis on the diseases of the chest, at the same time attend the surgical wards of Hotel Dieu.

"Whether the project will fail or not it remains to be seen. Adieu my dear friend let me hear from you when leisure permits and may we hope that it is reserved for us to be to each other, a mutual source of pleasure as we proceed along the down hill of life.

"Be pleased to remember us with the most friendly regards to Mrs. T. and to all your children.

"I remain ever most truly your friend

"ISAAC HULSE"

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

The next letter is interesting as it gives us news of a medical treatise written by Dr. Hulse and published separately, not in a magazine or periodical. Until meeting with this letter we supposed that Dr. Hulse had left no literary productions, and as a collector of books relating to Long Island or written by Long Islanders, the intelligence was extremely pleasing to us. Although mentioning some very intimate details regarding its publication, the author unfortunately omits to give us the title of the work. However, we feel sure that the book is a very rare item, as it has not appeared in auction sales or on booksellers' shelves within the knowledge of the writer, who, when it comes to looking for a scarce Long Island book, does not easily give up the quest. It may be that still other books by Dr. Hulse will come to light. The Doctor's correspondence with Thompson, which is the basis for a great deal of the information contained in this biography, of course stops at the noted historian's death, in 1849, whereas Dr. Hulse survived him seven years, and it is possible that he might have written other works which we do not know of and which were published subsequent to the termination of the aforesaid correspondence. Sad to relate, our knowledge of Dr. Hulse between the year 1849 and the year of his death, 1856, is very meager.

The fire which is spoken of as taking place at Sag Harbor occurred on the night of the thirteenth of November, 1845, and was the most destructive of three conflagrations which visited that village, the other two taking place in 1817 and 1838 respectively. The 1845 fire destroyed about seventy buildings and effected a large pecuniary loss, which, contrary to Dr. Hulse's opinion, was covered by insurance to a considerable degree.

"U. S. Naval Hosp. Pensacola

"Dec. 12th, 1845

"My very dear Friend—

"Yours of the 24th ulto. has quite recently come to hand—Mrs. H. and myself were on a 14 days visit in New Orleans when it arrived. It is true I have procrastinated in informing you of my safe arrival here. I was unsettled for two months while the Surgeon's house was under repairs and I was thrown out of my habits both of study and writing. Shortly after moving into our house it was proposed that we should go to New Orleans

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to select the furniture allowed by the Government. All these circumstances have interfered with my correspondence.

.

"My health was greatly benefited by my visit to the Sharon Springs and I am now about as well as usual.

"I saw with deep regret the account of the conflagration at Sagg Harbor as I know that many of our worthy men of Suffolk must have suffered severely. It is not probable that insurance was effected in the majority of cases.

.

"I send you by this mail a copy of my Thesis as published recently in New Orleans. The printer has made sad work with my composition. I was there to correct the proofs of the first 10 or 12 pages and being compelled to leave, I left the business in the hands of a medical friend Dr. Fenner, editor of the New Orleans Medical and Physical Journal.

"This dissertation is now published exactly as it was written in 1823. It maintains doctrines which, at the time, received very little favor from the medical profession, but by the revolutions of opinions they have grown much into fashion in the present day, and are now sustained by some of the ablest writers both in Europe and America. I have supported them in a Treatise on Yellow Fever published in the Baltimore Medical and Surgical Journal in 1843, and my practise in this disease is an illustration of the principles laid down in the Thesis. I allowed Dr. Fenner to retain 12 copies for the professors in the Medical College of Louisiana and a few learned physicians in New Orleans whom I named to him—but he has retained 25 copies (one fourth of the number published) he says to distribute in the South and West.

"I shall send copies to the different Libraries and Colleges at the North.

"My family are now all in fine health. My son Isaac is Captain's Clerk on board the U. S. Brig *Lawrence*, which vessel is now in this port.

"I have a tutor in my house, who is a fine scholar; he takes my children and those of three families of my neighbors. He is studying medicine with me. He is to acquire his medical education in a manner similar to that in



Benjamin F. Thompson, Historian of Long Island
From an oil-portrait by W. S. Mount

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

which I acquired mine and he says he is stimulated by my example. His name is Holt—a native of Mobile.

“Mrs. H. joins me in kindest regards to yourself, Mrs. Thompson and your daughter.¹ Mine to Mr. and Mrs. Vanderhoof² and to the venerable Mr. Greene.³

“I remain ever yours most truly

“ISAAC HULSE”

We now come to the Mexican War period. Dr. Hulse was still in charge of the Pensacola Hospital, and to this point were shipped all the wounded and invalids belonging to our fleet operating against Vera Cruz and other Mexican cities.

The war between the United States and Mexico began toward the end of April, 1846, although the formal declaration of war was not promulgated by Congress until May 13, 1846. Texas had cast off Mexican rule and had become an independent republic—to be later annexed to the United States. A question regarding the southern boundary of the State and the occupation of the disputed strip of territory by an armed force under General Zachary Taylor led to hostilities, but the real and underlying cause for war was the desire of the Democratic party then in power under President Polk to acquire additional territory which could be erected into slaveholding States with consequent increased representation in Congress for this party. The old story of the strong against the weak was repeated, and Mexico went down to defeat, and as the price of peace ceded to us a large amount of territory which later became the States of California, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, and parts of New Mexico and Colorado. The war lasted from 1846 to 1848 and was a costly struggle for the two belligerents, both in men and money. It was unpopular in the North, particularly in New England, and gave rise to James Russell Lowell's witty “Biglow Papers.”

¹ Mary Greene Thompson.

² Thompson's daughter Harriet Satterly married Jacob Tuthill Vanderhoof of New York.

³ Thompson's father-in-law, Rev. Zachariah Greene, Revolutionary soldier and pastor of the Setauket Presbyterian Church for many years. He made his home with Thompson at this time.

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General Grant in his "Memoirs" says that he considered the Mexican War "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."

"U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola,
March 13th 1847.

"B. F. Thompson Esq.,
"Hempstead L. I.

"My dear and ancient friend,

"I have before me your cherished letters of the 24th July 1846 and of the 3rd March 1847. They will be both stitched together and kept and read again and again. In the first you say as much as that a friendship has subsisted between us 'which has not been allowed to cool in the course of 25 years.' I will go further and say you have been my friend and adviser since 1813, which summed up will make, next autumn thirty four years.

"Yours of July has been kept in a certain drawer in my desk and I have opened it several times for the purpose of replying to it and have closed it again and put it as often in its place because I had a piece of intelligence to communicate which wrung my heart and I had not courage enough to proceed. It is simply this:—the malady which made such ravages here last summer deprived us of a favorite daughter. She died after 4 days illness at the age of 7—full of excellence, loveliness and promise. After the lapse of so much time I can communicate the circumstance to you in a sober manner and can at the same time commingle my sorrows with yours which you feel for the lost Henry.¹

"You are perfectly aware that my position at this Hospital is most important. At this point are received all the invalids, wounded etc., of the Fleet operating against Vera Cruz and the other Mexican commercial cities. The Hospital under my charge was full during the last season, of patients from the above named source, and to add to our calamity we had an epidemic among the inmates of the Hospital and at the Navy Yard in our vicinity, having its origin in local causes. This epidemic was fatal in

¹ Thompson's son, Henry Rutgers, died October 15, 1842, aged twenty-nine.

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

about 10 or 12 cases, involving some distinguished persons. Scarcely an individual residing at the Hospital escaped an attack and many of the inmates had 1, 2, 3 or even 4 attacks, and the disease did not cease until the appearance of frost.

"A full account of this will be published in April next in the New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal, and a copy will be sent to you.

"It may be regarded in some degree remarkable that early in the spring of last year I had apprehended some evil from the recent clearings which had been made from the margins of certain ponds in the vicinity of the Hospital and Navy Yard, and in consequence had anticipated sickness. I had announced this to the Navy Department and in doing so called attention to the fact that the Army was equally interested with us, inasmuch as their Barracks are to be erected within 200 yards of the Hospital. I therefore proposed that a Joint Commission of Army and Navy Surgeons should be ordered to investigate the character of a (*similar*) disease which had appeared here in 1844, and if possible, point out means to prevent its recurrence.

"A board of Army and Navy surgeons was ordered to assemble here on the 2nd of Nov. last. The orders were issued severally from the Secretaries of War and Navy. The board consisted of six medical officers, equally of the Army and Navy, I was President. Our report was made and the remedy recommended—our report was accompanied by a Map to each Department, of the topography of the place. An appropriation of \$7000 has been made in consequence, for draining the ponds, filling up their margins and making canals through them to be walled up with bricks or stone and thus causing them forever to disappear and relieving this beautiful locality from anything like stagnant water.

"I believe my dear friend, that this place and the South generally, is worth your visiting, and I do hope and trust you may one day visit us and witness many things which with all the extent of your information you will still find new.

"In my home you will be as a brother, or as a father as you shall choose. I have a good and amiable wife and descended from her are John, Albert and Emma.

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"The history of Georgiana you know and as it regards Isaac,¹ he is asking for a Lieutenancy in one of the ten new regiments of the army. He has served with credit at Point Isabel² when that place was menaced previous to the Battles of the 8th and 9th May.³

.
"I have not space to tell you much of our Library. Suffice it to say that at my suggestion, the Secretary of the Navy has consented that I should open a subscription among our invalids and that I should be permitted to beg from distinguished publishers, booksellers and learned associations. I proceeded upon it and if I am allowed to remain here 3 or 4 years more there will be at this Hospital such a Library as has never been raised on such means in so short a time. I received no longer ago than yesterday an invoice of books as a donation from New Orleans valued at \$109. We have already 400 volumes and the Secretary of the Navy has just said he will place at my disposal \$150. Am begging all over the United States. Books are coming in from unknown hands. Thompson's History of Long Island has been placed there by

"Your friend most affectionately

"ISAAC HULSE"

The next letter is the last of the series and the last one that Dr. Hulse wrote to Mr. Thompson. It is dated February 18, 1849, and on the twenty-first of the following month Thompson died, aged sixty-four. The grief which Dr. Hulse must have felt at the death of his old friend can well be imagined by those who read these pages. Beyond a doubt a letter of condolence was sent to the widow, but it was not among the other letters written by Dr. Hulse, and the author has never found it. In this connection it is interesting to recall that Benjamin F. Thompson was a public man almost his entire life, and was loved and respected by many, yet among his correspondence no communications condoling on his sudden and unexpected

¹ Children of his first wife.

² A point near the present boundary of Texas and Mexico, on the gulf.

³ Now known as the battle of Resaca de la Palma, one of the early engagements of the Mexican War.

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death are found. They were probably kept in a separate place and evidently came into the hands of some descendant other than his granddaughter Miss Julia H. Thompson, from whom the compiler of this biography obtained Mr. Thompson's literary remains. For a full account of Benjamin F. Thompson's interesting life the reader is referred to the enlarged edition of his well-known "History of Long Island," published in 1917 and edited by the writer of these pages.

"U. S. Naval Hospital, Pensacola
"Feby 18th, 1849.

"My very dear friend,

"I received this day your letter of the 8th inst., and I now have before me yours, equally valued, of the 14th of Novr. last which has, to my regret, remained till this day in my drawer of unanswered letters. I have remained silent this long in consequence of being charged with the business of Mr. Innerarity¹ and of being occupied in fitting up a dwelling for him and his family within the walls of an ancient warehouse belonging to him and still standing upon the lot (a large one) upon which his mansion stood. The walls are of brick 3 ft. thick at the base and three stories high. The work which I have contracted for is nearly completed and I shall have the pleasure, perhaps, by the 1st of March next to see him comfortably placed in his new dwelling with as many conveniences almost as he enjoyed in the spacious dwelling that was destroyed. His actual loss by fire cannot, any part of it, be restored. He estimates it at over \$50000 and I fully believe he does not overrate it. I thank you kindly in his name, for the generous sympathy you have manifested for him and his family. The impression made upon him at the time was overwhelming, as you justly supposed; at his time of life, the shock came with violence accentuated as it were in proportion to his years. I am happy to find however, that he is fast regaining his usual cheerfulness and hilarity and I look forward for many years of comfort and enjoyment for him, near the spot where all his children were born.

"I shall hail with pleasure your new edition of the History of our cher-

¹ Dr. Hulse's father-in-law.

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ished old Long Island, and I subscribe to five copies of it for my five children.¹

"I request you to present my kindest respects to Mr. Vanderhoof² his wife and children. You can scarcely imagine my delight when I heard that Mrs. V. was recovered.

"I acknowledge with heartfelt satisfaction the benefit I received from the instructive and even parental letters to Frederick. I regarded them as much addressed to me as if it were a reality,—I can assure you they were sought for every Saturday night in the Baltimore Ladies Museum more earnestly than any matter expected to be found therein.³

"The family of my father-in-law are happy to return the friendly salutations with which you have greeted them. You have been long known to Mr. Innerarity through me and more especially through your works.

"Mrs. H. and all my children will ever cherish your name with affection and will think themselves allied by strong ties to all your family.

"In answering two letters in one I have great reason to apologize, if to do so were possible between such friends as we are. If certain circumstances were equal I ought to write two to your one. I do not believe I shall do this until after your visit to Florida on *that* Railroad. Neither you nor I will go to California on a Railroad—we leave that to younger blood. But we may live to see the day when we may meet each other by swift conveyance—"Railroad Through," *Deus Accordat*.

"I see what you are up to now.⁴ You are a perfect wizard: You have hit upon a scheme that will wake up who?—the lowly, the exalted, the affectionate, the curious, the religious, the philosophic, the speculative, the

¹ Thompson's untimely death, on March 21, 1849, prevented the publication of the third and enlarged edition, which was ready for the press at the time of his death. It was finally published in 1917.

² Jacob Tuthill Vanderhoof, of New York, Thompson's son-in-law.

³ These letters to "Frederick" are somewhat of a mystery. It would seem as if they were written by Thompson and published in the "Museum," presumably a magazine. Frederick may have been a relative of Dr. Hulse.

⁴ He refers to Thompson's projected work on interesting and curious epitaphs. The historian's untimely death prevented publication. Mr. Thompson copied a large number, but unfortunately the manuscripts have disappeared or been destroyed.

HIS LIFE AND LETTERS

abstractionist; in short, all classes of mankind. All these classes, aye more, will assist you and all will want your work.

"You will derive but few materials from the Cemetery of Pensacola; such as are worthy your acceptance you shall have and I will collect them. This is introductory to the fact that previous to the occupation of the place by the Americans, no epitaphs were to be found in the Cemetery. The Cemetery is a square tract of land containing 30 aspens, situated a short distance from the inhabited part of the city, and the mode of burial was to place the coffin containing the corpse several feet below the surface and turn an arch in brick work from head to foot over it, above the surface of the ground.

"No monuments either of marble or stone are to be found in that Cemetery, as I believe, dating antecedent to the cession of the country to the United States. Some monuments with inscriptions quite modern are to be found there and I will describe them to you hereafter. There is one in the Grave-Yard of this Hospital worthy your notice. It consists of a pedestal and pyramid of white marble erected to the memory of a sailor who died at this Hospital. The funds were subscribed by the officers and crew of the ship to which the man belonged and the story is told in the epitaph. The funds were placed in my hands and I caused the monument to be erected at a cost of about \$175. I sent my son Albert, this afternoon, to copy the inscription, it reads thus:

IN MEMORY OF
JOHN JULIUS BAKER
(KNOWN AS GEORGE GRAY)
LATE SEAMAN ON BOARD THE U. S. SLOOP
FALMOUTH, WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE
OCT. 1ST 1845 AGED 25 YEARS.

THIS MONUMENT IS ERECTED BY THE OFFICERS AND
CREW OF THE FALMOUTH AS A TRIBUTE TO HIS MORAL
WORTH AND HEROIC CONDUCT IN SWIMMING TO THE
ASSISTANCE OF THE OFFICERS AND MEN, WITH WHOM
HE WAS CAPSIZED IN PENSACOLA BAY, OCT. 28, 1844.

THEN I SAW AND CONSIDERED IT WELL:
I LOOKED UPON IT AND RECEIVED INSTRUCTION.
PROV. 34, 32.

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"Gray came to his death by the exposure described in the epitaph. The boats crew consisted of 2 officers and 12 men. One of the former was drowned, and many of the men were saved by the manly exertions of Gray. The survivors held on to the wreck nearly an entire night in a heavy sea. They were rescued by a country barge, accidentally coming upon them near morning.

"If you insert this epitaph in your work, the memory of John Julius Baker will be more durable than the beautiful monument which has been erected with such affectionate regard by his ship-mates.

"When I commenced writing to you at 6 P.M. I sent to the Steward to know the temperature of the atmosphere, the reply was 31° . So you perceive we have freezing weather, and so we have had since Wednesday night last, when we had the greatest fall of snow ever known here since 1811, viz: 2 inches. In fact we find persons who were born and have lived 30 years here, who never saw snow lie on the ground. Some of the snow of Wednesday night is still to be seen and this is a bitter cold night—rousing fire—peach trees and peas in blossom. Garden looking well two hours before sundown—but how will it look tomorrow?

"The oldest inhabitant is a consequential personage, he declares he has seen the like, and who will gainsay it?

"My feet are cold near a popping fire and if I do not stop soon the cold will take me higher up, so good night my dear friend and accept the affectionate regards both of Mrs. H. and myself for Mrs. T., Miss Mary and Edward,¹ his lady and your grandchildren. When you come down to pay me that visit the weather will be warmer—I will almost guarantee it.

"I remain yours, ever most affectionately

"ISAAC HULSE

"Benjⁿ F. Thompson

"Hempstead, Queens Co.

"N. York."

It was indeed good-night, for a little while after the receipt of the letter Thompson's spirit passed to the great beyond, and Long Island lost a famous son.

¹ Thompson's daughter and son.

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Unfortunately we do not know very much about Dr. Hulse's life after this letter which was written on February 18, 1849. During this month he was granted thirty days' leave of absence.

On July 22, 1851, he was ordered to the U.S.S. *Saranac*, and on August 21, 1851, he received an appointment as Fleet Surgeon of the Home Squadron. This was an exceedingly important position, given only to surgeons of acknowledged ability and experience.

Dr. Hulse soon was back at Pensacola, however, and his early return may have been occasioned by another outbreak of fever; if such were the case, the authorities would naturally want Dr. Hulse there, as he had no equal in treating these diseases. His order to return to Pensacola bears date June 25, 1852.

According to the naval records Dr. Hulse did not again leave the hospital for any other assignment, and his death took place there on August 29, 1856, aged fifty-eight. If he had lived two days longer he would have reached his fifty-ninth birthday.

Thus closes the life of one of the United States Navy's most skilled surgeons and withal an educated Christian gentleman. It is hoped that this biography will make Dr. Isaac Hulse's life and achievements better known to the general public, and especially to the citizens of Suffolk County.

“Who does his task from day to day,
And meets whatever comes his way,
Believing God has willed it so,
Has found true greatness here below;
Who guards his post, no matter where,
Believing God must need him there,
Although but lowly toil it be,
Has risen to nobility.
For great and low there's but one test,
'Tis that each one shall do his best;
Who works with all the strength he can,
Shall never die in debt to man.”

THE END

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